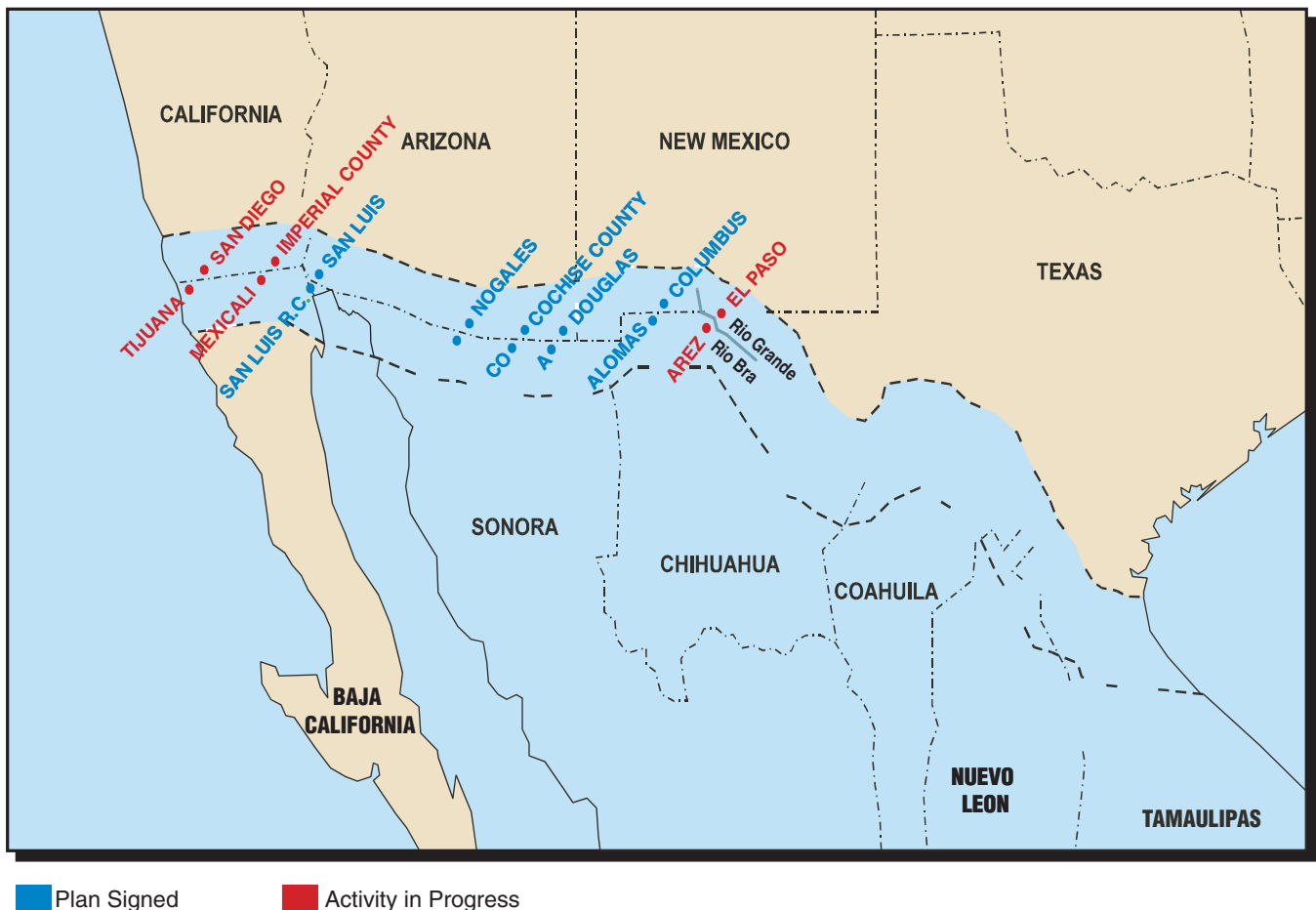
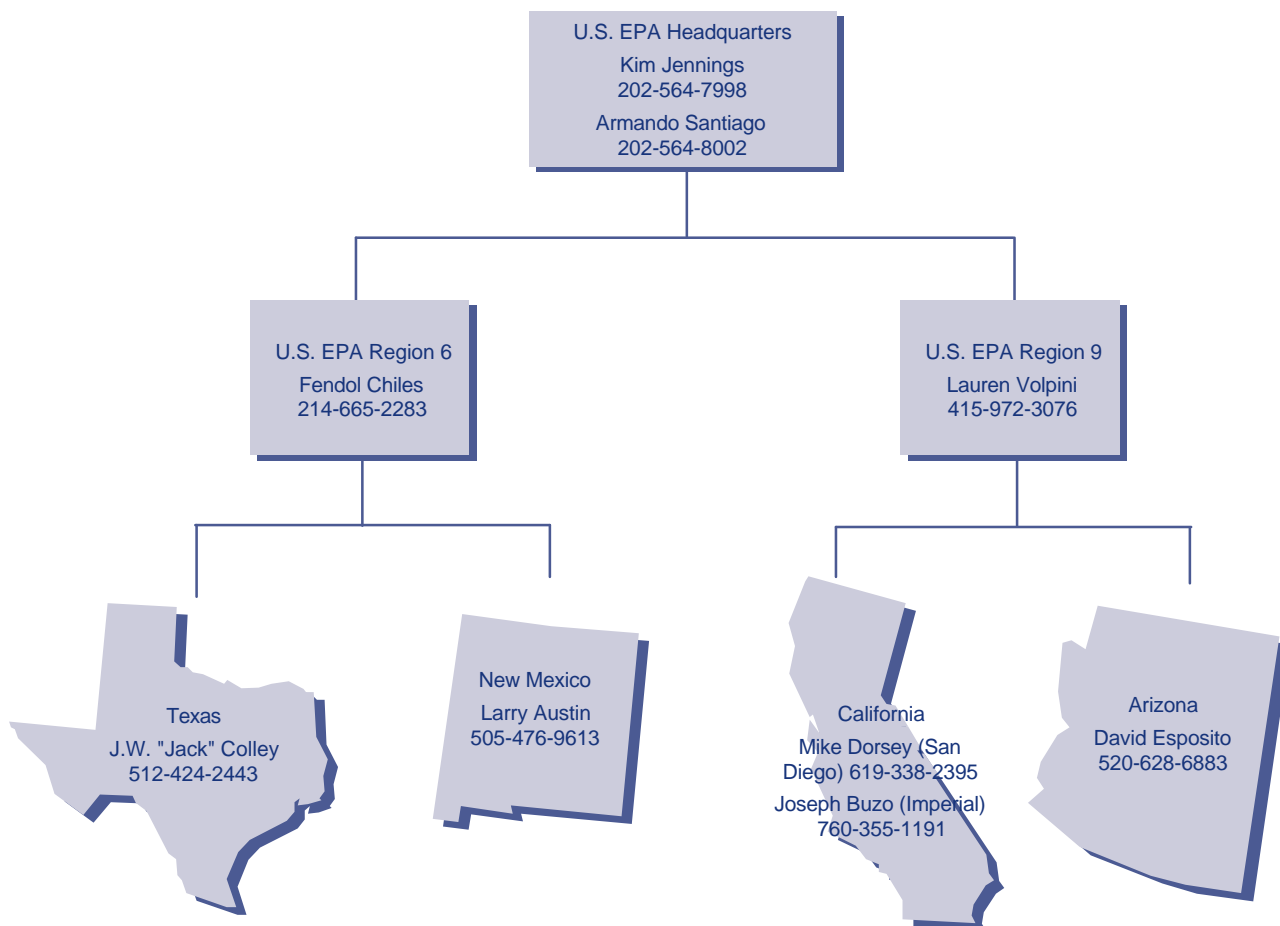


SEMIANNUAL REPORT ON UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER CONTINGENCY PLANNING ACTIVITIES



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INTRODUCTION

The U.S.-Mexico border region is an area of incredible natural beauty, scarce hydrological resources, and burgeoning metropolitan areas. In the past decade, the North American Free Trade Agreement has sparked new business growth and more industries have opened plants near the border. This increase in border commerce has increased cross-border traffic and, in turn, the potential for chemical spills.

Chemical emergencies do not respect international boundaries. In 1983, in La Paz, Baja California, the United States and Mexico signed the Agreement on Cooperation for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment in the Border Area, otherwise known as the “La Paz Agreement” or the “1983 Border Environmental Agreement.” This document established a framework for cooperation between the two countries to prevent, reduce, and eliminate sources of air, water, and land pollution in the zone extending 100 kilometers along each side of the international boundary. Since the establishment of the La Paz Agreement, the United States and Mexico have collaborated on efforts to protect the health and environment of border communities.

In 1988, the Joint U.S.-Mexico Contingency Plan was developed to provide a framework for cooperation between the United States and Mexico to respond to a polluting incident that may pose a significant threat to both parties or that affects one party to such an extent as to justify warning the other party or asking for assistance. This plan was revised and signed in June 1999, in order to reflect legislative, regulatory, policy, and procedural changes within the countries.

The Border XXI Program, initiated in 1996, was a five-year plan for addressing the most challenging environmental and human health problems in the region. The goal of Border XXI was to promote sustainable development in the border region by seeking a balance among social and economic factors and the protection of the environment in border communities and natural areas. The governments of the United States and Mexico sought to advance the concept of sustainable development by finding ways to assist border communities in their decision-making processes, including providing information, financial assistance, and opportunities to exchange ideas among the various stakeholders. The two countries signed a new border plan, “Border

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KEY DECISION POINTS AND DOCUMENTS

August 1983	La Paz Agreement — <i>Established cooperation for the protection and improvement of the environment in the border area.</i>
January 1988	U.S. – Mexico Joint Contingency Plan for Accidental Releases of Hazardous Substances Along the Border — <i>Provides a framework for cooperation between the United States and Mexico to respond to incidents that may pose a significant threat to both parties.</i>
October 1996	Border XXI Plan, Framework Document — <i>Addresses the most challenging environmental and human health problems in the border region while promoting sustainable development.</i>
October 1996	Border XXI Work Plan— <i>A comprehensive planning program aimed at both defining and implementing a shared binational vision for the future promoting environmental protection and sustainable development.</i>
June 1999	Joint United States Mexico Contingency Plan (replaces 1988 Contingency Plan)
March 2003	Border 2012 Program Document— <i>Protects public health and the environment in the U.S.-Mexico border region consistent with the principles of sustainable development through partnerships among Federal, state, local and U.S. tribal governments.</i>

2012 U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program,” in April 2003, in Tijuana, Mexico. This new plan emphasizes a bottom-up approach, anticipating that local decision making, priority setting, and project implementation will best address environmental issues in the border region.

A critical element of the U.S.-Mexico border cooperation program is the development of sister city partnerships between municipalities and counties in the United States and Mexico. Sister cities are building confidence along the U.S.-Mexico border by planning to help each other when there is an emergency on either side of the border. Plans call for police, fire, paramedics, and other personnel from both sides of the border to respond quickly to large fires, dangerous chemical spills, or other emergencies. The plans also address preparedness issues including: hazard identification; pollution prevention; risk reduction; training; exercises; and equipment. The first sister city emergency plan was signed in 1997 with Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Currently, there are 10 contingency plans in place along a booming border area to ensure adequate response for large-scale emergencies. Six other pairs of sister cities also are working on plans along the 2,000-mile border that spreads from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean.

The purpose of the Semiannual Report on United States-Mexico Border Contingency Planning Activities is to consolidate information on U.S.-Mexico border joint response and contingency planning efforts by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Regions, border states, and sister cities in order to promote the exchange of information, communication, and coordination among these groups. The types of U.S. and binational activities presented in this report include efforts such as developing Sister City Plans, response exercises, training courses, and responses to actual hazardous material and environmental incidents. Essential documents, Web sites, and contact information also make this report a useful reference document. Updates are published twice a year by the U.S. EPA’s Office of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (OEPPR).

OEPPR provides leadership, advocacy, and assistance to:

- Prevent and prepare for hazardous material (HAZMAT) emergencies;
- Respond to environmental crisis; and
- Inform the public about chemical hazards in their community.

To protect human health and the environment, OEPPR develops, implements, and coordinates regulatory and non-regulatory programs. The office carries out this work in partnership with U.S. EPA Regional offices, domestic and international organizations in the public and private sector, and the general public.

In order to protect human health and the environment throughout the United States and along the borders, OEPPR administers programs jointly with Canada and Mexico to prepare for and prevent chemical emergencies along the northern and southern borders of the United States. Each of these three countries organizes its efforts according to its government structure. For the United States, OEPPR depends primarily on the support of the respective EPA regions, the border states, and the local communities. Additional support is provided by other agencies, such as the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency.

NEWS, ALERTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Border 2012 U.S. - Mexico Environmental Program

Signed in April 2003, the mission of the new border plan is to protect public health and the environment along the U.S.-Mexico border region consistent with the principles of sustainable development through partnerships among Federal, state, local, and U.S. tribal governments. This 10-year bilateral agreement emphasizes a bottom-up approach, anticipating that local decision making, priority setting, and project implementation will best be addressed by three border-wide workgroups and four binational regional workgroups and associated task forces.

The border-wide workgroups will concentrate on issues that are multi-regional (identified as a priority by two or more regional workgroups) and primarily Federal in nature (requiring direct, high-level, and sustained leadership by Federal program partners in the U.S. and Mexico). In the case of the Cross-border Contingency Planning and Emergency Response Workgroup or Joint Response Team, cross-border response requires the consistent application of a common protocol to ensure that effective actions are taken.

Binational regional workgroups and their associated task forces are the foundation of Border 2012. They are multi-media and geographically-focused, and emphasize regional public health and environmental issues. The coordinated activities at the regional level support the efforts of the local Task Forces.

Three Border 2012 Task Forces Formed in Region 9

Over 80 government officials met during May and June, 2003, in Rio Rico, Arizona, and Calexico, California, to establish two formal Border 2012 Task Forces to help meet the Border 2012 Goal #5—to reduce exposure to chemicals as a result of accidental chemical release and/or deliberate acts of terrorism. A third task force has been established in San Diego City and County, California, and the Tijuana, Mexico, area and will expand the scope of its objectives once its Sister City Plan is signed in October. *For more information on the Border 2012 Task Forces, see the feature article on page x*

U.S.-Mexico Regional Workgroup Meeting

During the U.S.-Mexico Regional Workgroup meeting regarding Border 2012 on July 10, 2003, the OEPPR workgroup task force proposed to continue the pressure on local officials to sign the Sister City Plan for El Paso, Texas/Juarez, Mexico and assigned a task group to collect a database of Chemical Information from the Maquiladora's and facilities in the cities along the U.S.-Mexican border.

Lauren Volpini Acknowledged by the State of Sonora

In May 2003, Lauren Volpini received commendation from Lic. Carlos Kitazawa, State Director of the Office of Civil Proteccion at the Arizona/Sonora Commission Plenary Session in Tucson, Arizona. Ms. Volpini was recognized for her leadership in the development of the four Binational Sister City Emergency Response Plans between the State of Sonora, Mexico, and the State of Arizona.



Lauren Volpini Acknowledged
by the State of Sonora.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

- U.S. EPA Region 6 Regional Workgroup Meeting will be held August 28, 2003, in Laredo, Texas.
- San Diego City and County, California, and Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, Sister City Plan Signing Ceremony is scheduled to be held October 24, 2003, in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico.
- Border 2012 National Coordinators Meeting is scheduled to be held in late 2003.
- U.S. EPA Region 9 Regional Workgroup Meetings are scheduled for late November 2003 or January 2004.
- Ten States Retreat will be held in mid November 2003, in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico.

Overview

Over 80 government officials met during May and June, 2003 in Rio Rico, Arizona, and Calexico, California, to establish two formal Border 2012 Task Forces to help meet the Border 2012 Goal #5—to reduce exposure to chemicals as a result of accidental chemical release and/or deliberate acts of terrorism. A third task force was created in the San Diego County, California, and the Tijuana, Mexico area. Once their Sister City Plan is signed in October, the current Sister City Plan Steering Committee will expand the scope of its objectives under Border 2012 and continue its work as a Task Force.

Imperial County/Mexicali Border 2012 Task Force

During a meeting on May 28, 2003, officials decided the key objective of the Imperial County/Mexicali Task Force will be to develop an Imperial Valley/Mexicali Sister City Binational Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. The Chief of the Imperial County Fire District, the Director of the Baja California State Civil Proteccion, and U.S. EPA will provide leadership and coordination for this Task Force.

Rio Rico, Arizona Border 2012 Task Force

On June 4, 2003, officials met in Rio Rico, Arizona, to discuss the formation of an Arizona/Sonora Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force. Over the last three years, all four Arizona/Sonora Sister City pairs have signed binational emergency response plans and established emergency planning committees; a State-to-State level Task Force has long been thought necessary to resolve border-wide issues and risks that transcend Sister City limits. At a followup meeting in Nogales, Sonora in July, it was decided that the Director of the Cochise County Health Department, the Director of the Sonora State Civil Proteccion, and the U.S. EPA will provide leadership and coordination for this Task Force.

San Diego County/Tijuana Border 2012 Task Force

The San Diego City and County/Tijuana Binational Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is in its final stages of development and is expected to be signed in a formal ceremony in October 2003. The Steering Committee proposed to the Border 2012 Regional Workgroup Co-chairs that they serve as the Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force, to which they agreed. The PROFEPA Delegate of the State of Baja California, the Chief of the San Diego County Environment Health Department's HAZMAT division, and the U.S. EPA will provide leadership and coordination for the Task Force.

For more information on the three Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Forces or the Sister City Plans, please contact Lauren Volpini, U.S. EPA Region 9 U.S.-Mexico Program Manager for Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response, at (415) 972-3076.

RIPPLE EFFECT: BIOTERRORISM EXERCISE IN EAGLE PASS, TEXAS AND PIEDRAS NEGRAS, MEXICO & HOSPITAL MASS CASUALTY DECONTAMINATION COURSE OVERVIEW

Bioterrorism Exercise Overview

On September 5, 2002, U.S. EPA coordinated a border exercise in Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico, to test the effectiveness of the area's Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) and Joint Response Team (JRT) in response to a bioterrorism threat on the U.S.-Mexican border. This effort was coordinated with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), which is co-located with Region 6 in Dallas, Texas. This exercise simulated an unprecedented event for the area and exposed a crucial need for training of medical response personnel to prepare for such an event.

This exercise prompted a meeting with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Regional Director, Ms. Linda Penn, in Dallas, Texas. She recommended that an additional meeting take place to discuss the medical responsibilities and requirements in the area of contingency planning and emergency response for hazardous material spills and terrorist activities.

Participants

Attendees of the hazardous materials (HAZMAT) Prevention and Preparedness Meeting included: DHHS, Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), Texas Department of Health (TDH), U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), University of Texas, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA),

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned from the exercise and the meeting are as follows:

- The local hospitals and medical technicians need a coordinated plan for public health and emergency response with local and state agencies.
- The State of Texas has many resources available to the local communities, but the local communities are not aware of these resources.
- A Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) type of plan would be very appropriate for these border communities where the population exceeds hundreds of thousands.
- Resource sharing processes need to be worked out with the United States, Mexico, and the State of Texas.
- Health agencies in general were not aware of the emergency response structures that exist in the environmental communities and how the respective functions/interest can be combined or blended into the environmental response plans. For example, the U.S. EPA works closely with Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCS) and JRT. The JRT functions in the U.S.-Mexico cities located along the border and is co-chaired by U.S. EPA and Procuraduria Federal de Proteccion al Ambiente (PROFEPA) from Mexico. The JRT responds to the U.S.-Mexico border and those cities along both sides of the border, often referred to as Sister Cities.
- A disconnect between the environmental response communities and the medical response communities is apparent.
- The environmental response community and the medical communities do not cross paths in education, training, meetings, conferences and drills.
- When a disaster occurs, all groups come together at the local level. However, the first time these groups meet should not be during a response. It is vital for all response programs to communicate and establish a relationship by developing plans and practicing the plans in order to have a better understanding of the overall relationship of the response community.
- JCAHO has accepted the leadership role to guide hospitals and healthcare clinics as they prepare emergency management plans. This is accomplished through a standards certification process. A key component to the JCAHO Emergency Management Standards E.C.1.4 and E.C.2.9.1 is exercising the hospital emergency plans through a required community drill.

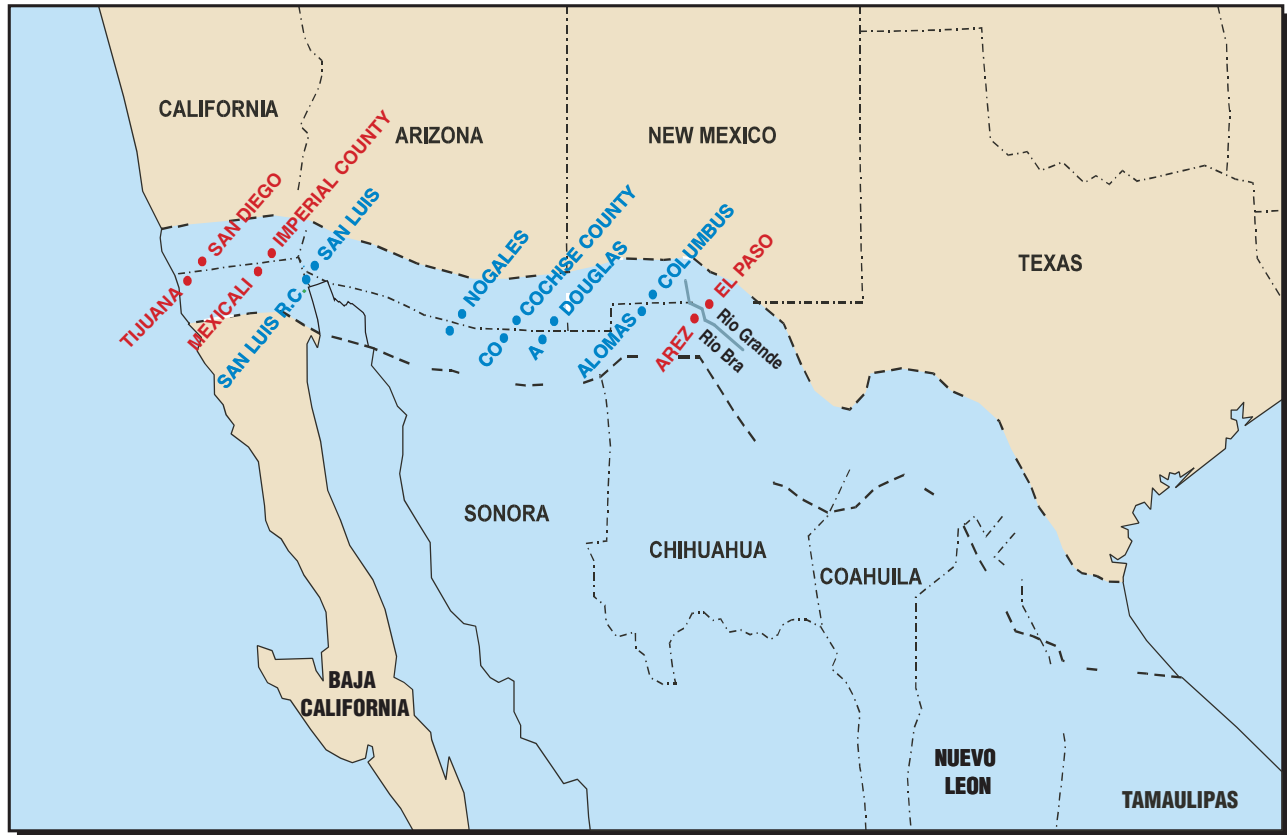
Hospital Mass Casualty Decontamination Course Overview

U.S. EPA and ATSDR held a very unique meeting on April 16, 2003, in Region 6 with state and Federal organizations focusing on enhancing HAZMAT preparedness and prevention along the U.S.-Mexico border, specifically to prepare the health care systems (hospitals and clinics) to better address any disaster situation.





The Superfund Division in Region 6 developed a Hospital Mass Casualty Decontamination Course, which has been taught in El Paso, Texas, to five major hospitals and two clinics in English and Spanish. Sixty-five participants were from Juarez, Mexico, and 185 participants were from the local community in El Paso, Texas. This training was provided for Emergency Room, Environmental Services, Engineering Services, and Security personnel; medical technicians; nurses; doctors; and other administrative officials of the various facilities. This course material was taught again in Harlingen and McAllen, Texas, on May 28-29, 2003. Region 6 plans to share this information with all LEPCs along the U.S.-Mexico during the fiscal year 2004.

Participating in this preparedness exercise was a first-time experience for Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Mexico. Furthermore, this exercise was noteworthy because it gave hospitals that participated in the exercise accreditation in the Federal Medicare and Medicaid programs.


SISTER CITY PLANNING














 Plan Signed
  Activity in Progress


<i>Sister City Planning Overview</i> <i>Activities completed, in progress, and planned</i>			
SISTER CITIES		SISTER CITY DOCUMENTS	STATUS
City and County of San Diego, California, and Tijuana, Baja California		Plan development nearing completion. Currently undergoing legal review by all parties. Plan concentrates on cross border emergency response communication and risk identification.	Interim Final Document Issued. Ceremony Planned for October 2003
Imperial County, California, and Mexicali, Baja California		Border 2012 Task Force formed. The development of a Sister City/County Plan is the groups' priority.	Planning Initiated
San Luis, Arizona San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora		<i>Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between San Luis, Arizona San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora</i>	Signed February 25, 2000
Nogales, Arizona Nogales, Sonora		<i>Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora</i>	Signed March 17, 2000


 Plan Signed

 Activity In Progress

Sister City Planning Overview
Activities completed, in progress, and planned

SISTER CITIES		SISTER CITY DOCUMENTS	STATUS
Cochise County, Arizona Naco, Sonora		<i>Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between Cochise County, Arizona, and Naco, Sonora, Mexico</i>	Signed October 4, 2002
Douglas, Arizona Agua Prieta, Sonora		<i>Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Sonora</i>	Signed November 9, 2001
Columbus, New Mexico Ascension-Puerto Las Palomas, Chihuahua		<i>Cross Border Contingency Plan, U.S./Mexico Sister Cities, Columbus/Ascension-Puerto Las Palomas.</i>	Signed November 21, 2002
El Paso, Texas Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua		This plan is still in draft stage.	This plan should be finalized in 2003.
Presidio, Texas Ojinaga, Chihuahua		Meetings were held in July 2001 regarding the preparation of the Sister City Plan.	This plan should be finalized in 2003.
Del Rio, Texas Ciudad Acuna, Coahuila		<i>Cross Border Contingency Plan, U.S./Mexico Sister Cities, Del Rio/Ciudad Acuna.</i>	Signed October 19, 2002
Eagle Pass, Texas Piedras Negras, Coahuila		<i>Cross Border Contingency Plan, U.S./Mexico Sister Cities, Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras</i>	Signed March 25, 1998
Laredo, Texas Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas		<i>Cross Border Contingency Plan, U.S./Mexico Sister Cities, Laredo/Nuevo Laredo</i>	Signed December 21, 1998
McAllen, Texas Reynosa, Tamaulipas		<i>Cross Border Contingency Plan, U.S./Mexico Sister Cities, McAllen/Reynosa</i>	Signed February 19, 2000
Weslaco, Texas and Rio Bravo-Progreso Norte, Tamaulipas		<i>Cross Border Contingency Plan, U.S./Mexico Sister Cities, Weslaco/Rio Bravo-Progreso Norte</i>	April 22, 2003
Brownsville, Texas Matamoros, Tamaulipas		<i>Cross Border Contingency Plan, U.S./Mexico Sister Cities, Brownsville-Matamoros</i>	Updated May 2002

 Plan Signed

 Activity In Progress

ACTIVITY UPDATE: SISTER CITY PLANS

Completed Since Last Issue:

Completed Since Last Issue:

April 22, 2003

Weslaco, Texas, and Rio Bravo-Progreso Norte, Tamaulipas

A Sister City Plan for Weslaco, Texas, and Rio Bravo/Progreso Norte, Tamaulipas, was signed April 22, 2003. This plan was not one of the original fourteen sister city plans mentioned under the first Integrated Border Environmental Plan (IBEP), but was created as a result of the McAllen/Reynosa Sister City Plan and exercise. This signing signifies the cooperative spirit of response and protecting human health and environment. This plan is the seventh Sister City Plan signed in Region 6 along the U.S.-Mexican Border since 1998.

Plans In Progress:

October 2003

City and County of San Diego, California and, Tijuana, Baja California

The Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan Between the City and County of San Diego, California, and the City of Tijuana, and Baja California has been developed and is undergoing final legal review by all parties.

Late 2003

El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua

Planning efforts are continuing for the development and signing of the Sister City Plan for El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. The Mayors of both communities are in favor of the plan and progress is being made within the fire departments of each city. A signing is anticipated in 2003.

2004

Imperial County, California, and Mexicali, Baja California

The Border 2012 Task Force has initiated the development of an Imperial County, California-Mexicali, Baja California, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan and will continue its efforts into 2004.

Conducted Since Last Issue:

February 25, 2003

U.S.-Mexico Marine Contingency Plan Exercise

U.S. EPA participated in the activation of emergency response protocol when the U.S. Coast Guard and the Second Mexican Naval Zone conducted a Table Top Exercise in Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico, on February 25, 2003. On February 26, 2003, the United States and Mexico signed a MEXUSPAC Annex of the MEXUSPLAN, a formal cooperative agreement between the two countries in the event of an oil or hazardous material (HAZMAT) spill in the marine environment.

March 2003

Operation Black Hole Parts 1 & 2: Santa Cruz County, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora

U.S. EPA conducted HAZMAT Exercise Design training on the U.S.-Mexico Border in the fall of 2001. During one of the courses, the Santa Cruz County Exercise Design Team was formed and the group has continued meeting, designing, and conducting exercises. Operation Black Hole Part 1 was a table top exercise that took place in September 2002, with 76 individuals participating from 36 agencies. This was followed up with Operation Black Hole Part 2, a functional exercise that was conducted in March 2003, in which 120 individuals from 58 agencies participated.

Operation Black Hole 2's objective was to practice response to a U.S.-Mexico border emergency involving a weapon of mass destruction. The scenario involved a shipment of methyl bromide which was highjacked near Guadalajara, Mexico. Along with a cache of explosives in a U-Haul, the "terrorist" passed through U.S. Customs but was later stopped at a Border Patrol checkpoint for a secondary inspection. Also waiting in the secondary inspection location was a Mexican Tour bus, a high school bus, and two other vehicles. As the U-Haul was about to be inspected, the terrorist detonated his cargo in a suicide bombing causing a lethal explosion. The Santa Cruz Emergency Response Plan was exercised with emphasis on mass fatalities, law enforcement, mass care, evacuation, and terrorism.



*Participants engrossed in play during
Operation: Black Hole 2*

March 24-28, 2003

Laredo, Texas/Nuevo Laredo, Mexico

Focusing on the bridge point of entry into United States, this exercise was conducted by Proteccion Civil at bridge three in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Attendees included local emergency planning committees, Mutua Ayudar Committees and public officials from the cities of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico and Laredo, Texas. Five different fire companies attended from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico along with one fire company from the city of Laredo, Texas. The four-day exercise training week began with HAZMAT exercise instructions and included a table top exercise, evaluation training, and was concluded with the final full field exercise. Overall, the exercise was considered a success as this was the first one held by Proteccion Civil with assistance from the local fire companies.

May 14, 2003

Dirty Bomb Exercise, El Paso, Texas

A "Dirty Bomb" exercise was conducted in El Paso, Texas on May 14, 2003. The scenario incorporated a large explosion of approximately 10 pounds of TNT with Cesium 137 in the parking lot of the Ciela Vista Mall. As a result of the explosion, a bus load of people were injured. Federal On-Scene-Coordinator, Karen McCormick, played a significant role in the Joint Operations Center (JOC), while the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) were in control of the scene. Donn Walters, of U.S. EPA Region 6, participated with local officials and the mayor of El Paso, Texas, at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which was in the basement of the city hall. Superfund officials also were at the scene of the event and participated as players for the Department of Energy (DOE) in determining the radiological release. The Superfund representatives later attended the JOC and briefed Hardwick Crawford Jr., Special Agent in Charge, on Region 6 International Exercise activities along the border.

Exercise Preparations in Progress:

November 2003

Operation Black Hole 3 Full Scale Exercise

U.S. EPA will participate in the design and conduct of an all hazards binational exercise between Santa Cruz County, California, and the State of Sonora, Mexico.

Conducted Since Last Issue:

January 28-30, 2003

Arizona and Sonora—U.S.-Mexico Border Tire Pile Project Audit Training

To kickoff the field work portion of the Tire Pile Project, Region 9 conducted a three-day Audit Training in English and Spanish. The course included one day in the classroom and two days in the field, where the Project Team implemented the Audit Protocol and conducted pilot audits at Arizona and Sonora waste tire sites.

U.S.-Mexico Border Tire Project Audit Training



March 3-7, 2003

El Paso, Texas—Hospital Mass Casualty Decontamination Course

U.S. EPA Superfund staff conducted Hospital Mass Casualty Decontamination Courses in El Paso, Texas, under counter-terrorism authority. The course was provided for all hospitals in the city and participants from Juarez, Mexico attended. Training was provided to participating hospital personnel including Emergency Room, Environmental Services, Engineering Services, and Security personnel, medical technicians, nurses, doctors, and other administrative officials of the various facilities. This training educated personnel in donning and doffing personal protective equipment (PPE), and on the procedures for decontamination to protect people who enter the emergency room under mass casualty conditions and are contaminated with toxic substances. Participants also were instructed on how to use the APD 2000 air monitoring equipment that has been donated through the El Paso Fire Department. *See article on page 7*

Brownsville, McAllen, Laredo, and Eagle Pass, Texas—Spanish “Be Prepared” Brochure

A Spanish “Be Prepared” brochure for shelter-in-place and evacuation for school children along the border has been distributed in Brownsville, McAllen, Laredo, and Eagle Pass, Texas, and other border cities. This brochure provides an introduction to safety issues for hazardous materials and dangerous substances. U.S. EPA has a 10-minute video for this “Be Prepared” brochure that will be provided to the school systems for fire week activities.

Training Planned or In Progress:

September 2003

Continuing Challenge Training and Conference

U.S. EPA Region 9 will provide invitational travel and conference registration for 20 local emergency responders from U.S.-Mexico Border agencies. The U.S.-Mexico Border responders will organize themselves to compete in the annual HAZMAT Olympics. Their team name will be the “Border Brigade.”

ACTIVITY UPDATE: HAZARD ASSESSMENT

In Progress:

Arizona, California, Sonora, and Baja California—U.S.-Mexico Border Waste Tire Pile Project

Tire pile fires pose a threat to the public health, the environment, and emergency responders. The pile tires combine the elements of a fire, a HAZMAT release, and an oil spill discharge. U.S. EPA Region 9 initiated a project to examine the waste tire problem affecting communities on the U.S.-Mexico border. The project is well underway and is identifying high-risk waste tire piles in order to develop strategies for fire prevention and mitigation and to plan for response actions. A binational tire pile symposium to present project findings and provide a forum for a variety of waste tire issues, such as recycling and reuse, is projected. At this time, U.S. EPA is gathering additional information on the U.S. border tire piles identified in an earlier phase of this project. U.S. EPA collaborated with the Autonomous University of Baja California, Mexico to draft a proposal to fund audits at identified sites on the Mexican side of the border. The proposal remains unfunded and the future of binational project implementation is unknown.

El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua—Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Study (CFS)

A plan to conduct one CFS in the city of the El Paso, Texas, is underway because of traffic patterns of trucks carrying hazardous materials across the border. New CFS information is vital for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to plan for emergencies between the Sister Cities of El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. The information compiled will provide the hazardous materials vulnerability and risk analysis for the fire department to respond to potential spill incidents. This initiative commenced September 2002.

Conducted Since Last Issue:

February 9, 2003

CANAMEX Corridor Coalition Meeting

U.S. EPA Region 9 participated in the CANAMEX Corridor Coalition meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Corridor's southern U.S. gateway is Nogales, Arizona. The Coalition is focused on improving and increasing transportation, safety, through put, and commerce along the length of the Mexican, U.S., and Canadian highways that make up the corridor. The Nogales Point of Entry is an important and vulnerable pathway for the transportation of hazardous material and waste commodity flows

April 2003

Waste Tire Pile Project Presentation

U.S. EPA Region 9 presented a paper on its Waste Tire Pile Project in Arizona, Sonora and Baja California to the Binational Border Waste Tire Conference held in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. There was much interest in implementing a similar project in the rest of the border area.

In Progress:

August 2003

Brownsville, Laredo, Eagle Pass, and El Paso, Texas— Joint Response Team (JRT) Public Outreach Strategy Meetings

JRT Public Outreach meetings define the future outreach goals for the Federal, state, and Mexican representatives of the regional border plan for the Region 6 contingency planning section of the Border 2012 Plan. The immediate goals of these meetings are to familiarize the new representatives outside the Federal government and regional chairs with information and future goals on functions outlined in the new plan.

November 2003

HAZMAT Explo

U.S. EPA Region 9 will serve on a panel at the State of Nevada annual HAZMAT Explo to discuss binational emergency response issues and safe HAZMAT transport. Region 9 also will host a full day agenda on a variety of chemical emergency preparedness issues during which the U.S.-Mexico Border program will be featured.

Quarterly

Border 2012 Outreach Mechanisms

The Border 2012 Workgroups are gearing up to better inform the public and all border stakeholders of the status and accomplishments of the program as it is implemented. Region 9 will provide input to two Regional Newsletters and a Web site on the development and progress of the three Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Forces.

ACTIVITY UPDATE: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE RESOURCES

In Progress:

Arizona, California, Sonora, and Baja California— HAZMAT Emergency Response Resource Capability Assessment Protocol

Having found that the best way to advocate for needed additional resources is to know (and document) a jurisdiction's current state of readiness, groundwork has been laid for a Hazardous Material Emergency Resource Capability Assessment to be conducted by Region 9. The Assessment will seek the answers to the question: *How are our border communities preparing to address the increasing hazardous material risks posed by industrial and transportation-related activities including those that may be caused deliberately?* The objective is to identify resources that are rapidly available to the border cities and counties within the 60-mile border areas of California and Arizona. Although most of our U.S. border cities are relatively low in population and industrial risk, they are the gateways for significant amounts of hazardous materials awaiting export and also must consider the hazards posed by their adjacent and more populous Sister Cities. U.S. local responders must not only be prepared to protect thousands of tourists and respond to accidental releases from commercial rail and truck traffic that constantly move through their own communities, but they must be ready to help their Mexican neighbors in the event of a catastrophic chemical release. It is believed this survey tool can be applied to a variety of locations, and when translated into Spanish, could be utilized by Mexican authorities. The San Diego/Tijuana Sister City Steering Committee has agreed to conduct the study on both sides of the border for incorporation in their Sister City Plan. The assessment is currently underway in San Diego.

Border Emergency Response Surplus Equipment Exchange Program

U.S. EPA Region 9 has initiated a project to facilitate the exchange of used and surplus equipment for oil and chemical emergency response in the U.S.-Mexico border area. While surplus and perfectly serviceable used equipment is potentially available from the military, business, cleanup contracting firms, manufacturers, and even the U.S. EPA, there is currently no mechanism to obtain it and to provide it to those who would put it to good use. Connecting emergency responders in the U.S.-Mexico border region with needed equipment is the primary goal of the project.



Exercises

Santa Cruz County, California, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora—Operation Black Hole Parts 1 & 2 (*page 12*)

Santa Cruz County, California, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora—Operation Black Hole 3 Full Scale Exercises (*page 13*)

Training

Arizona, California, Sonora—U.S.-Mexico Border Tire Pile Project Audit Training (*page 14*)

U.S. EPA Region 9—Continuing Challenge Training and Conference (*page 14*)

Hazard Assessment

Arizona, California, Sonora, and Baja California—U.S.-Mexico Border Waste Tire Pile Project (*page 15*)

Program Development and Outreach

Arizona, Sonora and Baja California—Waste Tire Pile Project Presentation (*page 16*)

Nogales, Arizona—CANAMEX Corridor Coalition Meeting (*page 16*)

U.S. EPA Region 9—HAZMAT Explo (*page 16*)

U.S. EPA Region 9—Border 2012 Outreach Mechanisms (*page 16*)

Hazardous Materials and Emergency Response Resources

Arizona, California, Sonora, and Baja California, Mexico—HAZMAT Emergency Response Resource Capability Assessment Protocol (*page 17*)

U.S. EPA Region 9—Border Emergency Response Surplus Equipment Exchange Program (*page 17*)

ACTIVITIES IN CALIFORNIA



Sister City Planning

City and County of San Diego, California and, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico (*page 11*)

Imperial County, California and Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico (*page 11*)

Exercises

Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico—U.S.-Mexico Marine Contingency Plan Exercise (*page 12*)

Santa Cruz County, California, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora—Operation Black Hole Parts 1 & 2 (*page 12*)

Santa Cruz County, California, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora—Operation Black Hole 3 Full Scale Exercises (*page 13*)

Training

U.S. EPA Region 9—Continuing Challenge Training and Conference (*page 14*)

Hazard Assessment

California, Arizona, Sonora, and Baja California, Mexico—U.S.-Mexico Border Waste Tire Pile Project (*page 15*)

Program Development and Outreach

Arizona, Sonora and Baja California, Mexico—Waste Tire Pile Project Presentation (*page 16*)

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Hazardous Materials and Emergency Response Resources

Arizona, California, Sonora, and Baja California—HAZMAT Emergency Response Resource Capability Assessment Protocol (*page 17*)

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No Activity recorded this period.

ACTIVITIES IN TEXAS



Sister City Planning

El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua (*page 11*)

Weslaco, Texas, and Rio Bravo-Progresso Norte, Tamaulipas (*page 11*)

Exercises

El Paso, Texas—Dirty Bomb Exercise (*page 12*)

Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico (*page 13*)

Training

Brownsville, McAllen, Laredo, and Eagle Pass, Texas—Spanish “Be Prepared” Brochure (*page 14*)

El Paso, Texas—Hospital Mass Casualty Decontamination Course (*page 14*)

Hazard Assessment

El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua—Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow (CFS) (*page 15*)

Program Development and Outreach

Brownsville, Laredo, Eagle Pass, and El Paso, Texas—Joint Response Team (JRT) Public Outreach Strategy Meetings (*page 16*)

Documents of Interest

Sister City Plans

- **Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta, Sonora** (November 2001; bilingual copies available from the U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765)
- **Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between Cochise County, Arizona and Naco, Sonora** (October 2002; bilingual copies available from the U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765)
- **Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora** (March 2000; bilingual copies available from the U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765)
- **Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between San Luis, Arizona and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora** (February 2000; bilingual copies available from U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765)
- **Brownsville-Matamoros Sister City Emergency Response Plan** (May 1997; available from Fendol Chiles, U.S. EPA Region 6, (214) 665-2283)
- **Eagle Pass-Piedras Negras Sister City Emergency Response Plan** (March 1998; available from Fendol Chiles, U.S. EPA Region 6, (214) 665-2283)
- **Laredo-Nuevo Laredo Sister City Emergency Response Plan** (December 1998; available from Fendol Chiles, U.S. EPA Region 6, (214) 665-2283)
- **McAllen-Reynosa Sister City Emergency Response Plan** (February 2000; available from Fendol Chiles, U.S. EPA Region 6, (214) 665-2283)
- **Border 2012 Document** (April 2003; available from Lauren Volpini, U.S. EPA Region 9, (451)744-2333)
- **Columbus, New Mexico/Las Palomas, New Mexico**, (November 2002; available from Fendol Chiles, U.S. EPA Region 6, (214) 665-2283)

General Information

- **“Border Visions,”** a 50-minute, bilingual education video about Border XXI (December 1999; For information about viewing or obtaining a copy, contact the U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765)
- **Fact Sheets for the Border XXI Workgroups** (available from U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765.)
- **Joint United States-Mexico Inland Contingency Plan** (signed June 4, 1999; available in English and Spanish from Kim Jennings, U.S. EPA Headquarters, (202) 564-7998 and on the Web at <http://www.epa.gov/OEPPR/pubs/border/ipmjcp-e.pdf>)
- **Semiannual Report on United States-Mexico Border Contingency Planning Activities** (Issue Number 1, February 1998; Issue Number 2, August 1998; Issue Number 3, January 1999; Issue Number 4, September 1999; Issue Number 5, April 2000; Issue Number 6, October 2000; Issue Number 7, August 2001; available from Kim Jennings, U.S. EPA Headquarters, Tel.# (202) 564-7998 and on the Web at <http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/ip-bopr.htm#mexico>)
- **United States-Mexico Border Environmental Indicators 1997** (June 1998; available from Kim Jennings, U.S. EPA Headquarters, (202) 564-7998 and on the Web at <http://www.epa.gov/U.S.mexicoborder/indica97/index.htm>)

Guidance Documents

- **Clean Air Act Risk Management Plan, manual in Spanish** (1998; translation of 157-page English manual; available on CD-ROM from Fendol Chiles, U.S. EPA Region 6, (214) 665-2283)
- **Emergency Response Guidebook 2000** (available in English and Spanish from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Government Printing Office (<http://bookstore.gpo.gov>) and through your state coordinator for emergency response organizations (<http://HAZMAT.dot.gov/guidebook.htm>))
- **Enhanced Exercise Design Course Manual** (CA Specialized Training Institute under U.S. EPA contract; available from U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765)
- **Imperial and San Diego Counties Pesticide Episode Response Plans** (September 1998; available from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, (760) 339-4314)
- **Personal Safety Plan: Chemical Emergencies** (1998; available from Corpus Christi Nueces County LEPC, (361) 880-3960)
- **Response Procedures for 45 Chemicals** (November 1998; available from Corpus Christi Nueces County LEPC, (361) 860-3960)
- **U.S. Coast Guard ICS Basic Student Guide and Field Operations Guidelines/ICS Guía de Operaciones de Campo para Derrames Petroleros and ICS Básico Guía de Estudiante** (available in Spanish at <http://www.epa.gov/U.S.mexicoborder/cper/ics.htm> under the "Training" link)

Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Studies

- **Hazardous Material Commodity Flow Study: Calexico, California Area (January 2001)**; available from U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765 and at <http://www.epa.gov/OEPPR/ip-bopr.htm>
- **Hazardous Material Commodity Flow Study: San Diego, California** (June 2001; available from U.S. EPA Region 9 Border Office, (619) 235-4765 and at <http://www.epa.gov/OEPPR/ip-bopr.htm>)

Internet Sites of Interest

- **U.S. EPA OEPPR** — <http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/> EPA Office of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Web site that contains such information as Risk Management Plans, laws and regulations, and numerous tools and resources for chemical emergency preparedness and prevention.
- **U.S. EPA Region 6 Border Program** — <http://www.epa.gov/r6border/index.htm> EPA Web site provides information on cooperative efforts to protect the environment along the U.S.-Mexico border region.
- **U.S. EPA Region 6 Border Program/U.S.- Mexico Border XXI Contingency Planning and Emergency Response Workgroup** — <http://www.epa.gov/r6border/ef-erp.htm>
- **U.S. EPA Region 6 Border 2012** — <http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/index.htm>
- **U.S. EPA Region 9 Border XXI Program** — <http://www.epa.gov/U.S.mexicoborder/> U.S. EPA Web site includes details on the proposed Border 2012 Program which is designed to protect public health and the environment in the U.S.-Mexico border region.
- **U.S. National Response Center** — <http://www.nrc.U.S.cg.mil> The homepage to the National Response Center, which is maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard. The NRC is the sole Federal point of contact for reporting oil and chemical spills.

- **Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Mexico Border Program** — <http://www.adeq.state.az.U.S./environ/regional/sro/border.html> The Southern Regional Office's Border Programs Unit manages environmental programs and issues along the Arizona/Sonora border.
- **Border EcoWeb by San Diego State University** — <http://www.borderecoweb.sdsu.edu> This Web site is home to the Border EcoWeb which is designed to facilitate public access to environmental information for the U.S.-Mexican border region. This site is a working draft, so many pages are still under construction. Please check back periodically to find out what is new.
- **Border Environment Cooperation Commission** — <http://www.cocof.org> This Web site is the homepage of the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission whose goal to assist local communities and other sponsors in developing and implementing environmental infrastructure projects, and to certify projects for North American Development Bank financing.
- **Border Information & Solutions Network** — <http://www.bisn.org/> This Web site is the homepage of the Border Information & Solutions Network (BISN) whose mission is to promote sustainable development of the U.S.-Mexico border by enhancing collaboration and communication through the Internet.
- **California U.S. EPA Border Environmental Program** — <http://bep.calepa.ca.gov> The Web site is the homepage to the California-Baja California Environmental Program whose mission is to work towards a better environment within our shared border by identifying and resolving unique environmental and natural resources challenges and the resulting public health issues.
- **City of Brownsville, Texas** — <http://www.brownsville.org/brownsville/> Web site for the City of Brownsville, Texas.
- **Corpus Christi Nueces County Local Emergency Planning Committee** — <http://www.cclepc.org> This Web site contains information details hazardous chemical currently stored or transported through the City of Corpus Christi and Nueces County, Texas. It also contains information on what individuals can do to protect themselves, families, and businesses from a emergency involving hazardous materials.
- **Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission** — <http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.U.S./> is forwarded to <http://163.234.20.106/index.html> The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. TCEQ is the lead environmental agency for the state. This commission's responsibilities include those of permitting, licensing, compliance, enforcement, pollution prevention programs and education related to preservation and protection of our air and water quality and safe disposal of waste.